

Environmental Education Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2013
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Baton Rouge Office, 4th Floor Conference Room

I. Call to Order: Convened by Commission Chair, Gary Balsamo at 1:13 PM.

II. Roll Call/Sign-in

Members present:

Gary Balsamo
Ann Wilson
Brenda Nixon
Dinah Maygarden
Kelly Templet

Others present:

Venise Ortego
Juliet Raffray
Larry Allain, USGS
Sairah Javed, LDWF

III. Minutes from last meeting

There were insufficient members present for a quorum and therefore minutes from the previous meeting could not be approved.

IV. Financial Report

Venise Ortego gave the report from the LDWF Accountant. This included EPA grant and Litter Abatement funds. It is anticipated that the LAEF account will have approximately \$14,000 remaining at the end of the current fiscal year. The EPA grant is in progress.

V. Coordinator's Report

Venise reported on the issues listed within the coordinator's report provided at the meeting. Most of this information is covered in body of the meeting below.

Outreach:

- EEC helped to coordinate the Louisiana Black Bear Workshop. There were 28 participants. Commission member Angela Capello served as one of the facilitators.
- Louisiana Earth Day: the LEEC table was featured in the Advocate.
- Envirothon: Carrie and Juliet participated and one Louisiana team will be going to the finals in Bozeman, MT. One additional day-long training will be held at LDWF.

Venise provided a report on activities of Keep Louisiana Beautiful.

VI. Old Business

A. 2013 EE Symposium Report

Venise stated that most of the accounting is complete. There are funds due from Academic Distinction Fund, who sent many teachers, and also from BTNEP.

Symposium Evaluations for sessions and short courses have been sent out via e-mail.

Brenda made a suggestion that the payments should move towards electronic methods rather than by check. Many people need an official receipt for reimbursement.

B. Environmental Literacy Plan Report

Venise reported that the report was sent to stakeholders for comment. Comments have been incorporated and it has now been sent out for public comment.

Final steps will include changing out photos and matching photos to text more closely and polishing the appearance.

Comments can still be received through May 31 and photos sent to Juliet. To date, not many comments have been received.

The next step will be to get the Governor's signature. (Secretary Barham will be asked to deliver it.)

A letter of support has been received from the Superintendent of Education.

C. EE Grant Awards

Venise said that the total amount of EPA funds available for the school sustainability grants was \$70,668.

Brenda and Venise have conducted monthly conference calls with school sustainability grant recipients.

Gary raised question of ethics and requirement of financial statements. Since Commission members do not manage money for the state, they do not have to submit financial disclosure.

D. Art and Language Arts Contest

Juliet Raffray reported that 795 entries were judged and winners were announced.

Juliet has submitted a letter of interest to Alcoa for \$20K for the next contest.

A notable essay was received from a student who had moved from Hong Kong and it was considered for a special award.

E. EPA Sub-grant Awards

Quarterly reports are due for this grant – the next will be due at the end of June.

Sustainability initiative projects will go before the grants committee for consideration.

These grants can include anything related to EE (except construction).

Grants committee members:

Ann Wilson

Brenda Nixon

Dianne Lindstedt

Angela Capello

Gary appointed Dinah Maygarden in addition to the above.

Quantifying Debris Workshop Series

There will be a 2-day marine debris educators' workshop (20 teachers) at Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge in late June. This is the final part of the EPA grant. The planning committee checked out the facility. Dianne's previous experience in marine debris will enhance the workshop.

During the school year, student field trips will take place as follow up to the PD workshop.

VII. New Business

A. 2014 EE Symposium

Committee assignments will be done via email.

Committees need to actively work together on assignments.

Coordinator's report on 2014 symposium:

Venise and Juliet followed up on idea to hold the symposium in Shreveport in 2014.

Bids from venues were received from the Clarion, Hilton, and Marriott.

Only the Hilton and Clarion meet our needs but the Clarion Hotel's bid is currently incomplete.

The Hilton bid \$10466.

The Hilton is attached to the Convention Center so Hilton would include one hallway of the Convention Center.

Including Arkansas EE community had previously been discussed. They also have a symposium every other year, similar in size to LA. Venise & Susan contacted Arkansas but they do not want to participate this year.

Commission member Wade Dubea (state forester) will be asked if support for symposium scholarships is possible.

Potential Invited groups:

Oil City School

Pre-service teachers - SELU

UL Monroe

LA Tech

Grambling

Research grantees will be asked to submit posters or their work.

B. State Toolbox

Venise has received two requests for whooping crane lesson plans:

1. GOMA - Diane Weatherby in Austin - Texas A & M. This could be an exemplary program of GOMA. Susan Bergeron and Ann Wilson will follow up.

2. International Crane Foundation

Venise/LDWF is exploring a formal partnership with ICF and they have expressed an interest in incorporating the lesson plans. Future whooping crane workshops are possible so it may be advisable to hold off on providing the lessons for several more months.

Venise/LDWF is applying for another grant from Chevron for this purpose. Parish school boards will be contacted re a summer professional development series.

C. Plant Identification Website for Louisiana

Presentation from guests:

Larry Allain, USGS

Sairah Javed, LDWF -Natural Heritage Program

There is a great need for a professional plant key for LA.

People use keys from other states currently.

There are few LA plant guides generally, and few online resources.

Groups who will benefit include wetland permits personnel, educators, general public

Larry has 100K photographs of native LA plants.
This will be an open source, searchable web-based tool.
Searches can be done by color, season, etc.
Printable pages can be bound for use in field.
It will also include Natural Heritage information and invasive plants.
Plants will be organized by community.
The site will include a glossary.
USGS National Wetlands Research Center will host the web site.
The total budget is expected to be \$189,680.
The Project is large and will be done in phases.
The goal is to cover 800 species per year.
Phase 1: Year 1 - includes search engine, Report generation, Review.

Venise will send this information out to commission for a vote on support of the project.
Response from those present was favorable.

VIII. Announcements

- LSTA conference will take place on October 31 - November 2 in Baton Rouge.
- Art and Language Arts Contest reception will take place on June 12.

IX. Next Meeting Dates: August 13, 2013, November 12, 2013, February 21, 2013

X. Adjournment: 3:02 p.m.